

Post 1/7/67

The Bobby Baker Trial

The Most Important Issue Involved Is the Use of Wire Tapping

By Drew Pearson and Jack Anderson

THE MOST sensational political trial in recent Washington history opens Monday when Bobby Baker, former Senate Secretary, goes on trial for income tax evasion.

Involved will be not merely the future of a young man who was the friend of Senators and Presidents, but also:

1. The ramifications of illegal wire tapping, even when the evidence is not used directly to secure an indictment;

2. The past operations of one of the wealthiest Senators, the late Bob Kerr (D-Okla.), who took Baker up on the mountaintop;

3. The operations of a powerful Republican, Rep. John W. Byrnes (Wis.) and his financial ties to Bobby Baker through the MAGIC firm;

4. The friendship between Baker and Lyndon Johnson, who used the enterprising young man from Pickens, S.C., as his eyes and ears in the Senate;

5. The question of raising political campaign funds.

Of these, the most important principle involved is the use of wire tapping. United States Judge Oliver Gasch has now supported the Justice Department's claim that none of the evidence used to indict Baker was taken from wiretapped conversations. But the basic constitutional issue is whether the FBI can listen in on a man's conversations.

Judge Gasch also ruled that J. Edgar Hoover did not have to testify as to whether he had supplied the Justice De-

partment with all the transcripts of bugging involving Baker. Hoover did not even sign a statement on this point. Merely an inter-office memo from Hoover to Fred Vinson Jr., head of the Justice Department's criminal division, bearing no signature, was submitted in evidence.

The most sensational testimony in the Baker trial will concern Kerr, the big oil man who dominated the Senate Finance Committee when in 1962 it was writing tougher taxes on the Federal savings and loan institutions.

Significantly, all of the indictments brought against Baker were based on incidents occurring well after Mr. Johnson left the Senate.

The Baker trial will probably last two months.

Washington Expose

SEN. TOM DODD (D-Conn.) lately has been reading more and enjoying it less. He sent to the Public Affairs Press for four of the first copies off the press of the book, "Washington Expose," which will be released this week.

Dodd didn't like what he read. The book told how he had phoned Windham High School's principal, H. Chester Nelson, in Willimantic, Conn., on Sept. 28, 1962, to tongue-lash him for featuring a lecturer critical of Dodd.

Then the Senator called in his internal security staff aide, David Martin, and ordered him to run an investigation of the offending lecturer who turned out to be a Hungarian freedom fighter with anti-Communist credentials as good as Dodd's.

Another time, when the

Senator's son, Tom Jr., brought home a "D" in a course at Georgetown University, the irate father sensed something un-American about the low mark and ordered the professor investigated. The finding was that Tom Jr. had not been doing his homework.

Reagan and Redwoods

RONALD REAGAN, the new governor of California, must decide within the next couple of weeks whether he still believes what he said about California redwoods — that "a tree is a tree, when you've seen one you've seen them all."

Under an agreement already signed by outgoing Gov. Pat Brown and the Interior Department, California will deed two state parks to the Federal Government, which, in turn, will purchase 8500 acres of redwood timberland. The three parcels will be combined into one big Redwoods National Park.

The two California state parks—Jedediah Smith Park and Del Norte Coast Redwoods State Park, both in Northern California — comprise some of the finest redwood forests in the country. With the Federal parcel, the new national park will cover 43,234 acres of forest land.

Sen. Tom Kuchel (R-Calif.) will introduce a bill to incorporate these three parcels of redwoods. It will take negative action by the new Governor to top him. Otherwise the agreement, signed by Brown, will commit California to the deal.

Unless Reagan objects, Congress is likely to approve. © 1967, Self-McClure Syndicate, Inc.